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TESTIMONY OF
SARAH M. RICHARDS, PRESIDENT
HAWAII THEATRE CENTER

TO: Councilman Nestor Garcia, Chair, Budget Committee
Councilman Gary Okino, Vice Chair, Budget Committee
Councilman Duke Bainum, Committee Member
Councilman Charles K. Djou, Committee Member
Councilman Rod Tam, Committee Member

RE: Special Budget Committee Meeting
Monday, April 13, 2009
9:00 A.M., Committee Meeting Room
BILL 15 (2009) - EXECUTIVE OPERATING BUDGET AND PROGRAM

To the Honorable Nestor Garcia and Members of the Budget Committee:

My name is Sarah Richards and I'm president of the Hawaii Theatre Center and I'm pleased to have the opportunity this morning to testify in support of the Mayor's original budget for the Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts in Bill 15, of \$740,000.

Specifically I'm here to urge you to restore the proposed cuts to the budget of MOCA office, as those cuts will have direct bearing on the Hawaii Theatre, and our ability to continue operating and delivering programs for over 100,000 Oahu residents and visitors annually, 5,000 public school students and 50 local non-profit performing arts and civic organizations.

The Hawaii Theatre has been in a long partnership with the City and County of Honolulu addressing not only the preservation of a cultural landmark in downtown Honolulu, providing the second-largest performance venue in the State, offering a wide array of attractions, but very specifically serving as the catalyst for the economic and cultural revitalization of Downtown/Chinatown.

Use of the City funds are vital components in helping us to keep the doors open, providing employment for local artists and provide a facility widely used by many organizations to present Hawaiian shows, ballet, children's programs, Broadway entertainment, classical music and plays.

MISC. COM. 796

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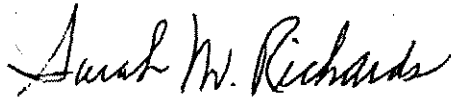
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Can you imagine the impact on local restaurants, galleries and shops in downtown Honolulu – that is now coping with serious crime and drug problems – if the 100,000 patrons that the Theatre brings to its door annually with bright lights and HPD security were to disappear?

As we all know, the fiscal crisis has hit all businesses and most particularly impacts non-profits who depend as in our case on 65% of our support from the public and private sectors to survive. The \$75,000 which the City and County has awarded to the Theatre has a multiplier effect of allowing us to operate, present shows and attractions, and contributes to the general economy.

Therefore, I urge you to restore the proposed cuts in the MOCA budget to allow our lights to shine brightly as we greatly enhance the economic and cultural life of our great city.

Thank you very much for your consideration.



Sarah M. Richards
President
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